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Courtesy of Messrs. Scott & Fowles

"THE GENTLEMAN WITH THE EGLANTINE," CALLED "THE BOTANIST"

BY SIR PETER LEY

MISCELLANY

LELY'S "GENTLEMAN WITH THE EGLANTINE"

(See opposite page)

THERE is in New York a portrait by Sir Peter Lely which is so finely wrought that one thinks of greater artists than Lely when one examines it. The subject is unknown and it goes by the title of "The Botanist," which is plainly *faute le mieux*, because the surroundings, the spirit and looks of the man are quite the contrary to those of a naturalist. Not many figures with a flower in one hand are botanists. This portrait is shown on the opposite page.

Sir Peter was the son of a Dutch captain Jan van der Faes and a Dutch mother, but happened to be born in Westphalia at Soest where his father was in garrison. Jan the father was born at The Hague and lived in a house decorated without with lilies, whence perhaps to him a nickname—"Jan Lelys," and whence according to tradition Peter his son derived his name of Peter Lelys. The father, noting in him a talent for drawing, put him with Pieter de Grebber, the Haarlem painter—and thus the boy entered into the traditions of Frans Hals and the rest of the Haarlemers. Peter Lelys came to England in time to paint a portrait of Charles I when he was a prisoner at Hampton Court; and under the Commonwealth he portrayed Oliver Cromwell, wart and all; yet at the Restoration the new king knighted him; and he was all the rage until 1676, when Godfrey Kneller the German came over and began to dispute the monopoly of orders from Court and city folk.

In the private diary of Pepys there is frequent mention of Sir Peter; thus on Oct. 20, 1662, he says:

"And thence gone with Comr. Pett to Mr. Lilly's the great painter who came forth to us; but believing that I come to bespeak a picture, he prevented us by telling us that he should not be at leisure these three weeks; which methinks is a rare thing. And then to see in what pomp his table was laid for himself to go his dinner; and here among other pictures, saw the much-desired-by-me picture of my Lady Castlemaine which is a most blessed picture; and that that I must have a copy of."

And again on July 18, 1666:

"And so full of work Lilly is that he was fain to take his table-book out to see how his time appointed, and appointed six days hence for him (Sir Wm. Pen) to come between six and seven in the morning."

This is early birding with a vengeance! Elsewhere we have been told that Lely began work at nine and painted steadily till four, when he turned his sitter out of doors and sat down to a fine dinner with many invited friends—whom he also entertained with a company of musicians; but apparently Pepys was not among the invited, unless that happened later than the last date in his diary.

Pepys and others went into ecstasies over Lely's portraits of the Queen, Ladies Castlemaine, Carteret,

Hamilton and so forth—the "beauties" ordered by the Duke of York, and now at Hampton Court; but the truth is that he painted men much better than he did women, perhaps because he liked and understood them better. The present instance is further proof. While we do see a suggestion of the elegance of Van Dyck in the hands, there is in other respects a more masculine spirit, or, should one say? a less courtier-like expression of character on the part of the painter. It is certainly one of the best pieces by Lely that has survived.

Observe the elegant Van Dyck attitude of the hand that holds the flower, the index or Jovian finger well parted from the third or Saturnine, and the fifth or Mercurial daintily put away from the fourth or finger of Apollo! So did Lely paint the tender tapering digits of Catherine of Braganza, Nell Gwynn, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Countesses of Northumberland, Falmouth and Ossory, La Belle Hamilton, who became Comtesse de Grammont, and Susan Lady Bellasys. Sometimes this hand pretends to hold draperies, but it is a mannerism inherited from Van Dyck.

But come—who is this handsome and dignified man who, with such an air of calling your special attention to it, carries a spray of wild honeysuckle in his extended right hand? Is it not plain we have here a reference to something most important, such as the lady he adores or the badge of his house? That he is no botanist or other devotee of natural history is plain as a pikestaff. Who at the Court of Charles bore a name that smells of this charming and modest little flower?

Well, in the first place, what did they call that flower in the seventeenth century? In France it might be called *chèvrefeuille*, *sainfoin*, *camérisier*, or in Provence the *pentecôte*. In England it was called wild or "fly" honeysuckle or woodbine or eglantine. John Milton probably means it when he speaks of "twisted eglantine," although eglantine should really stand for the wild rose. But we have Milton as witness that in the seventeenth century it was one of the names, and apparently an accepted name, of the wild honeysuckle of the hedgerows. Now there was a Scottish family of Eglantons, of whom the sixth Earl was at first against the King but later a royalist, while the seventh, who might have sat for Lely, was always royalist and against the Commonwealth. It is possible therefore that the person we see here was this seventh Earl, mentioned by Sam. Pepys under date of May, 1669, but not with any reference to Lely or to portraits. We must also remember that such badges were the fashion and that Lely himself, during his early days, was a painter of historical pictures with a taste for symbols, and only later on became a portraitist pure and simple. He would have relished the idea of symbolizing the house of Eglanton by

placing so pointedly in the hand of the Earl a spray of eglantine.

THE GOLDEN OAK BRANCH FOR JOFFRE

(See page 50)

When General Joffre was in America a number of persons who admired the man and were impressed by the magnitude of his services in stemming the flood of the invader and saving the world from a highly organized and desperate league of dispoilers, formed a Joffre Tribute Committee which includes many prominent men and women. The committee soon raised the funds for a gift which is reproduced on page 50. It is a branch of oak with acorns, modeled in graceful, realistic style from high-carat gold, on the leaves of which is carved the laconic dedication: AU HEROS DE LA MARNE. It was more particularly the bloody contests along the River Marne in September 1914 that gave the world to understand the unflinching, calm and simple nature of Joffre, who often has been compared to Grant for the firmness of his temperament, his nerve, his lack of "swagger." The future may hold still greater deeds in its lap for General Joffre, but the battle of the Marne at present represents his highest achievement; hence the inscription. The tribute has been forwarded to France and presented.

The designer by a quaint combination of events is a Franco-American citizen in business as a jeweler in New York. Mr. Paul Gillot of Gillot & Co., a Fifth Avenue jewelry firm, dropped his work on the outbreak of the war and was wounded in the long defense of the Verdun forts against the furious assaults of the armies under the German Imperial Crown Prince. He was wounded and returned to America to recuperate. The extraordinary fervor of New York when General Joffre came over with Mr. Balfour inspired Mr. Gillot to devise a suitable gift, and the Joffre Tribute Committee organized by him saw to it that the idea should be realized. The oak has always been a symbol of power and endurance since the oak at Dodona gave oracles from the most powerful of Greek gods and the Druids of Gaul cut the mistletoe with golden sickles from the favored oak.

Then here's to the oak, the brave old oak
Who stands in his pride alone!
And still flourish he, a hale green tree
When a hundred years are gone!

as Chorley wrote a half century or more ago. We can not hope that "Papa Joffre" will live a hundred years, but is it not a satisfaction to know that in his hale green old age he has received a visible, tangible memorial of the esteem felt for him by who knows how many millions of people?

NEW GROUP IN THE A. M. OF N. H.

The museum that fronts on Central Park West, New York has been adding to its groups of wild beasts and birds posed in lifelike animation amid landscapes which are as nearly as possible exact according to their habitat. A scene at nightfall in the Adirondacks has a background painted by Hobart Nichols, A. N. A. and the foreground and middle distance with imitation grass, leaves and trees carried out by Albert E. Butler. High grass and a clump of alders are seen in a clearing of the forest and among them on the fringe of the wood is a

group of buck, doe and fawn. These are fine specimens of the big Virginia deer taken from the herds of Col. Franklin Brandreth and mounted by Walter Escherich. The combination of work by taxidermist, composer of group and painter of background is very satisfactory. One is inclined to believe that group pictures like these do something more than relieve the observer from the discomfort that assails him when shown a case full of stuffed animals; they interest people in the life of birds and beasts and by so doing assist in the endeavor to make men regard them, not as objects to shoot or trap but to examine and enjoy for the charm of their unspoiled freedom. It is beauty touching science with her wand.

OLD MASTERS STOLEN FROM PETROGRAD

The rioting in Petrograd has given a free hand to looters and many palaces containing works of art are said to have been plundered by combinations of thieves as systematically as the museums and palaces in Belgium and France were gutted by the disciplined Vandals under the German flag. The contents of the palace of the Grand Duke Michael looking on the Neva River have disappeared, including a famous Correggio; and those of the Emperor at Tsarskoe-Selo and Peterhof, as well as that of the Empress Marie in Petrograd have shared the same fate. The worst blow would be the looting of the Hermitage, a palace celebrated for its collections of Rembrandts, Rubenses, Van Dycks and other treasures of Dutch, Flemish and Italian art; this also is reported. As the United States offer the only available fields for the sale of these well-known and carefully tabulated pictures, it is predicted that the looters will try to dispose of them on this side of the Atlantic, especially since a good many of the rioters are crooks who have been in America and "know the ropes." It is to be wished that they should be brought here, for they can then be saved from destruction and restored to Petrograd after the war. Any action should be employed that may prevent the persons in whose hands they appear from vandalizing them from fear of being detected with stolen goods; dealers and collectors of old masters are put on their guard herewith.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In publishing in our September number the article by Mr. E. H. Blashfield on John W. Alexander, we failed, through inadvertence, to note that the paper was originally prepared and presented at a meeting held in memory of Mr. Alexander in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., on May 18th, 1916, in connection with the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Federation of Arts, our national art society; that it had been printed in the July 1916 issue of *The American Magazine of Art*, the Federation's publication, and that to the courtesy of the American Federation of Arts, by whom it had been copyrighted at that time, we owed the privilege of reprinting.

ANOTHER WHISTLER TALE

Whistler had his fun with the London painter Mompes but the latter has once or twice got even with him. Now and then a new story about the exuberant James crops up. Some if not most